



"DANCES OF MEGHALAYA"

PREFACE

The Directorate of Arts & Culture has completed 23 years of its journey. One of the objectives of the Department is to organise festivals and document the various dances of the people tribes of Meghalaya and record them, thus showcasing the State's rich cultural heritage.

Dances are at the very heart of the people of Meghalaya, rich in repertoire. Dances are performed at the level of individual villages (Shnong), a group of villages (Raid) and a conglomeration of Raids (Hima). Local regional flavours and colours bring variations to the basic dance form, and bring out a wonderful procession of colours and sounds that speaks of joy, beauty and celebrations.

Most of the dances in this Publication are taken from programmes organised by the Department. Any suggestion and advice on this publication will be highly appreciated.

I am thankful to all the Officers of the Directorate of Arts & Culture and those involved in compiling this publication and hope that the same may be of use to the readers.

*Sd/-
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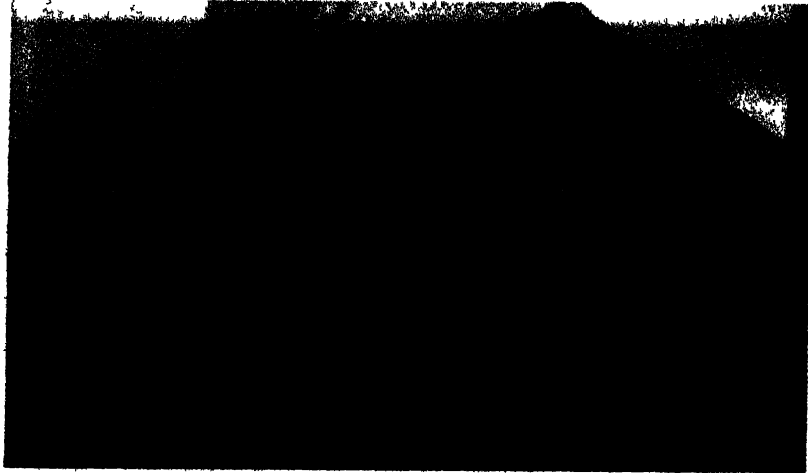
DANCES OF EAST KHASI HILLS

SHAD SUK MYNSIEM SHAD WEIKING



Shad Suk Mynsiem or dance with a happy heart performed by the Khasi Community is a part of Khasi religion and culture a thanks giving dance to God for all his blessings of the past year and an offering of Prayer to him for his care and blessings for the coming year. This festival is celebrated during the spring time, usually in the month of April in different parts of the Khasi Hills. The Major festivities are held for three days at the Weiking Dancing Ground in Shillong. Only virgin girls can take part in this dance while there are no restrictions on male dancer. The Dancers wear colourful silk dresses and ornaments made of Gold and Silver. The female dancers dance in the middle of the ground which shows that the female is the goddess of the hearth and home, the custodian of wealth and property of the clan, while male dancers with Whisks in the left hand and Swords in the right hand form a protective ring, dancing and circling around the females which symbolises that inspite of living in a matrilineal system, they are the protectors of the women folk and clan.

SHAD NONGKREM/ KA POMBLANG NONGKREM :



“Shad Nongkrem” which is also known as “Ka Pomblang Nongkrem” is one of the most important festivals in the United Khasi-Jaintia Hills. It is a socio-political, religious and cultural festival. . In the earlier days, this festival was celebrated in the mid-summer every year, but to conform with other cultural ceremonies, nowadays this festival is organised during the month of October or November every year for five continuous days. From the beginning to the end this festival is dominated by religious rites and rituals, where offerings are made and religious ceremonies are performed. It is also performed as a thanksgiving and as an external demonstration of prayer to Almighty God.

KA SHAD MASTIEH (The Victorious dance) :



This dance is one of the dances performed during Shad Suk Mynsiem. It is the manifestation of thanksgiving to God the Creator and the joyfulness of the heart after a victorious war. The Sword symbolizes the brave warrior and the (whisk) or Symphiah symbolizes peace with our neighbour peace with God and peace of the heart.

This dance brings the memories of their forefathers who laid down their lives to guard and protect the honour, purity and chastity of their womenfolk whose status is very high in the Khasi Society, and also to protect their land from the enemies. This dance is also held in some other villages, after the sowing season. The hearts of the people are filled with joy and happiness, when this occasion comes and the parents are proud to see their sons and daughters in the dancing arena once a year.

SHAD THMA



Since times immemorial, the Khasis a Schedule Tribe Community of the State of Meghalaya have fought various battles and wars preventing the intruders and invaders from occupying our beautiful hilly land.

The "Shad Thma" is a traditional and ancient dance depicting both males and females dancers. Musical instruments such as drums like the 'Ksing Shynrang' and 'Nakra' and the indigenous flute locally known as 'The Tangmuri' and bekks are used, accompanied by various props for the male dancers such as the 'Bow' 'Arrow' and shield and sword (a symbolic attire of a warrior) and bamboo basket among other items for the female dancers.

The "Shad Thma" in itself is a symbolic gesture where the male warriors seek the blessings of their loved and dear ones before going into battle.

SHAD PHAWAR



The Khasis have a number of poetry addresses put in verses in a couplet chanted by a group or exchanged amongst two groups of people on important occasions. These verses convey different meanings or lessons and are called "Phawar".

In reality, they form rhyming couplets. For examples "U Jhur te Shi Pirit", "I pylleng te shi Anna", "i dur te lah ibit, i rynieng te dang duna".

Shad Phawar is actually a dance wherein a group of two people or more try to outreach other by chanting these "Phawar" in rhythm and harmony accompanied by music.

SHAD BEH 'SING KHALAI' : (Umniuh Tmar)



This dance is usually performed by women accompanied by men. It is mainly performed by inhabitants of Umniuh Tmar, East Khasi Hills. The male members lead the women synchronising with the rhythm of the drums. This signifies that the men are the guardians of the women folk in every walk of life.

SHAD KYNTUID SLEIT : (Pynursla)



It is a dance which is usually performed during house warming ceremony. This dance showcases the conflict between husband and wife in a playful manner about who should establish authority over the household. During this dance, the women dash against the men who then fall on the floor.

SHAD SHOH KBA OF LAITKYRHONG



This dance signifies the natural beauty flourishing in our land. This dance depicts man's love for nature where young boys and girls work in unison during the period of separating the grain from the husk. The dancers express thanksgiving to God the creator who has blessed them with the good harvest.

SHAD PLIANG OF LAITKYRHONG



It is a dance which is joyfully performed by young maidens. When they dance they have to control and balance their heads and hands. The instruments used in this dance include the Duitara (String Instrument), Besli (Flute), Ksing (Drum), etc.

SHAD MAWJA



It is performed by the people of Mawja after religious rites. After a religious ceremony, people start merry making. Men, women and children can all participate in this dance. Their dresses are very simple, and the dancers join hands and form a circle while singing.

DANCES OF JAINTIA HILLS

LAHO DANCE



The Laho Dance is a traditional dance of the Jaintias and it has become one of the most important symbols of the Jaintia's culture as it is connected with the creation/origin of the Jaintia people. The original name of this dance is Chad Chiphiah or Chiphiah dance. Presumably, the name Laho was originated out of the singer who rhythmically chants the dancing tune of "hooh-ka-la-hooh".

The Laho dance signifies the family structure of the Jaintia, glorifies God for the blessings he has showered upon them. It also depicts the intimate relationship between God and man. This dance festival is celebrated annually after the harvest. Here a lone maiden dancer, represented as the priestess (Ka Langdoh) and custodian of the community's religion, is flanked by groups of dancers comprising, in each group, two males and a female in between. The male to the left represents the father, and the one to the right represents the maternal uncle of the female, who is the custodian of the family and the preserver of the clan.

PLATE DANCE (Shad kylla pliang)



This is a very famous dance performed by the Jaintia Community of Meghalaya. This dance is performed during any merry making occasion during a Community Feast, etc. Girls in their beautiful costumes with plates in their hands, balance these plates while dancing to the accompaniment of music. The dance is performed before the sowing seasons in tune with Mother nature, spreading the message of love and joy-praying to God to shower his blessing to mankind for a prosperous harvest.

Apart from the above mentioned purpose, Ka Shad Kylla Pliang was also performed to entertain the Jaintia King during the period when he paid visits to Narting his summer camp.

Ka Shad Kylla Pliang – is a symbol of the identity of the Pnar people.

CHAD THUNG SOLAH



This dance signifies the natural beauty flourishing in our land Through this dance the Pnars (Jaintias) depict their love for nature where young boys and girls work in unison during the period of sowing They work in harmony with the nature itself

The whispering woods, the green fields, the chirping birds and the beautiful flowers spreading their fragrance emphasize the truth that Meghalaya is blessed with love, peace and beauty

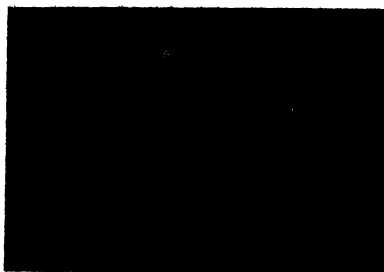
FISHING DANCE (Thed Litun Dathli) :



Meghalaya being a part and parcel of India's rich cultural heritage has its own unique way in depicting its various cultures. The Jaintia (Pnars) in their own way also contribute their creativity by presenting this dance.

Fishing dance is the dance which is joyfully performed by the young maidens after harvesting season. The young maidens along with cane basket in their hands go to the stream for catching fish. This method is a traditional method of catching fish, which is used by the Jaintia women as depicted in this dance. To catch the fish, they have to work together in perfect harmony and at the same time enjoying the natural beauty of the land.

SHAD RONGKHLI



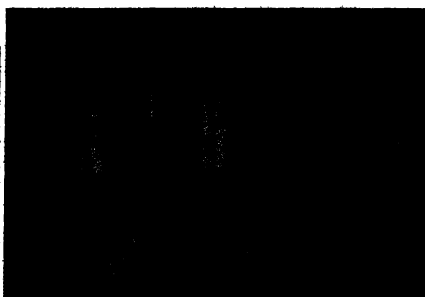
The Tiger dance (Shad Rongkhli) is one of the many Varieties of Traditional Dance of Indigenous people of Nongtalang.

This Tiger dance has been beautifully formulated in two ways One is a Traditional Dance for young and energetic males which is called as KERAI TDONG TYRLONG in local dialect. In this male dance, all the participants are dressed in PHROK (Half Frock like girls) and adorned with beautifully designed Necklace, well preserved right from the olden days. They put on a turban attached with special decoratives. Ornament called Tdong Tyrlong (which is made only with feather of a rare species of stork).

Another form is the dance from females and is popularly known as KELANG (female dance). In this type of dance, all dancers are dressed in Traditional Dress (Dhara- made of pure silk) and adorned with Gold Necklace of different designs, sizes and shapes.

A big drum is used in male dancing and a flute is sound to match the drum beat. In female dancing, a small drum (Dholak) and flute are played. A special instrument called LAKEDIAH is used in female dancing to keep the timing and pace. The Tiger dance has become popular through-out RI-WAR Jaintia, and many youths are taking part in this Traditional Dance every year.

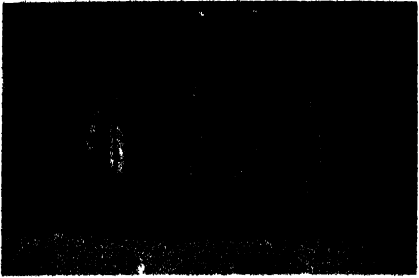
SHAD PYNJAW



Shad Pynjaw is another dance of the Jaintia people which still lingers till today

This dance features young boys and girls dancing together where the boys dance to a song teasing the girls who copy the modern dress code neglecting their traditional attire. On the other hand, the boys praise the other girls who look graceful and decent in their traditional dress. These girls on the other hand accused the boys of their being indisciplined and engaging themselves in so many undesirable practices that greatly affect social life.

SHAD RUWA



Shad Ruwa is a traditional dance of the Pnars, handed down to them from their great forefathers. "Ruwa" is a name which symbolises the attire worn by the dancers around their ankle which produces the sound of music. This dance is usually performed before the sowing season, a sign of wake up call to one and all to inspire them to rise up and prepare themselves whole heartedly for sowing of paddy seeds with love and devotion and a spirit of dedication for a task at hand.

SHAD SUKRA



Chad Sukra is a festival of the Pnar people of Jaintia Hills, celebrating the spirit of joyfulness and fraternity amongst the people, before all arrangements are made for the sowing season. It is also a season where people express their inner love to the divine power for all his blessings showered to humanity. This dance is usually performed during the month of April.

The two words, "Chad" meaning dance and "Sukra" means peace, symbolise a dance with peace and joyful heart and health and vigour. Chad Sukra provides a platform to all classes of people young and old alike to exhibit their inner talents, simultaneously, reviving the cultural heritage, bequeathed to the present generation since time immemorial. It is an occasion where one sheds off the ill feelings, hatred, enmity and suffering, but replace them with a bondage of love, admiration a paradigm, proliferating a message of love and oneness amongst the people.

One of the special features of Ka Chad Sukra is "Ka Mih Law" where people of all localities within Jowai town, participate in a procession.

Ka Chad Sukra is an expression of the uniqueness of culture of the Pnar people and their dignified life, mirroring the richness of their cultural heritage.

RONGKUSI



Rongkusi is the dance festival of the War Jaintia. This festival is celebrated every year during the month of April. This dance signifies the joy after the victory in the war. During the day time only the male dancers dance. The female dancers perform in the evening till dawn.

SHAD PASTIEH



"Shad Pastieh" Is dance that closely resembles the Mastieh dance or Sword dance of the Khyntiam, East Khasi Hills. It is connected with the migration of the Khyntiam clan of Lamare from Nongkynrih village. This dance is performed after the religious ceremony called "Ka Nguh Blai" performed in Raliang which is an Elaka in Jaintia Hills. On the first day, the completion of each rite is marked by the performance of the Pastieh dance. The dance is performed only by male dancers, who synchronize their movements to the drumbeats.

CHAD NONGREP



It is a dance depicting the life style of the farmers. The lyric of the song expresses thankfulness to mother earth. The dance signifies the love, admiration and content to their profession as bestow to them by Almighty God.

CHAD KIEHKE / CHAD KYRJIAR



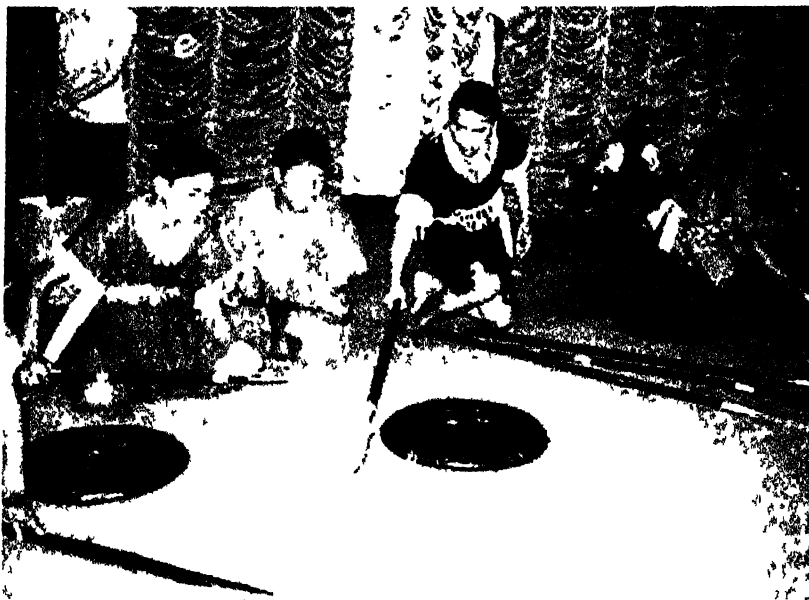
This is also a group dance which expresses the importance of having fun at work. In this dance the boys and the girls poke fun at each other while engaging in their work in the paddy field.

CHAD KHYRWOH



It is a romantic dance which displays the traditional way of proposing a girl.

CHAD KYNDEI



It is an action patriotic song and belief sung by the fighters while they prepare their swords and shield, bow and arrow in support to each other to fight the enemy aggressively and to protect their kingdom from external forces while the women engage in preparation of food for the fighters.

DANCES OF WEST KHASI HILLS

SHAD HARBA (Mawkyrwat)



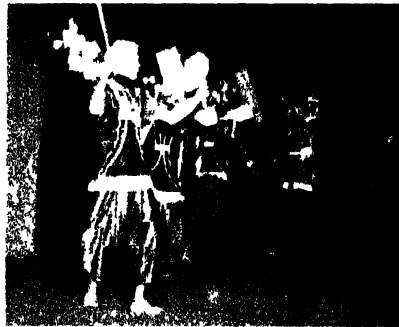
It is a dance in which our forefathers usually performed with the spirit of joy and happiness. Shad Harba is performed mainly during merry making and not specifically connected with any particular occasion.

SHAD KIEW IING



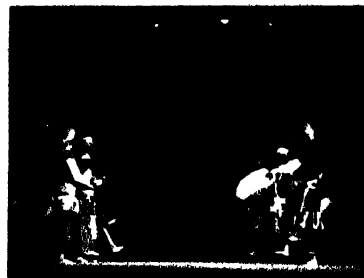
It is a dance performed by the people of Nongstoin of West Khasi Hills. It is a house warming dance. Before occupying the new house, the dancers perform a ritualistic dance called the Shad Kiew ling. All those who witness the dance can also participate.

After the house has been constructed, the members of the community perform the dance with the prayer that the house is blessed with strength and prosperity. The dancers include men, women and children.

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27

SHAD MASTIEH :- (Mairang)



It is one of the oldest dance performed by the Hynniew Trep Hynniew Skum (Khasis) to preserve the customs and traditions. This dance highlights the bravery of men by protecting the maidens and the Kingdom from any harm.

SHAD PHOR : (Mawkyrwat)



This dance is being accompanied by the drums, flute etc on the death anniversary This dance is not for all but for a selected clan

After the rituals, the dancers dance in a circle around the cremation area, where the effigy is burnt again

SHAD SOHRYNGKI : (Mawkadiang Nongstoin)



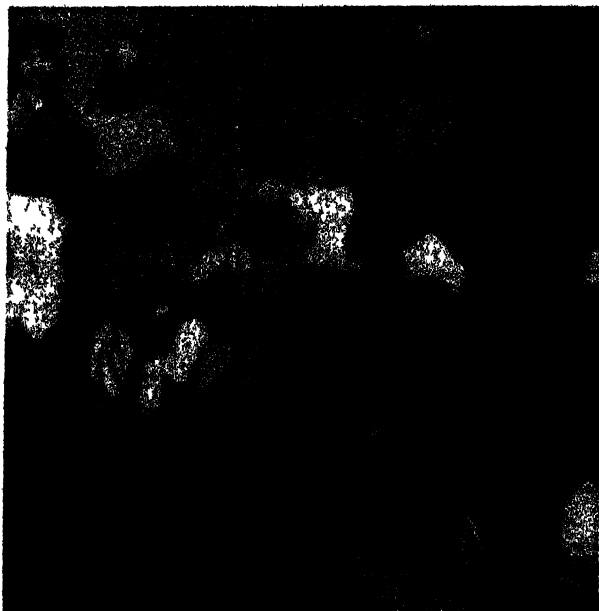
It is a dance performed by the people of West Khasi Hills usually bare handed but sometimes plates are also used. It signifies merry making after victory in any form of competition or conflict. The men and women in their traditional attire, march towards the village in the spirit of victory.

SHAD KHRONG KHAW (Rice collection dance)



This dance is customarily performed after the harvest, as a thanksgiving ceremony to God for the crops he has blessed. The people collected rice from each household for a village feast. This dance is also performed during the marriage ceremony or whenever people wanted to express their happiness and satisfaction for the blessing of God. The girls slide their gratitude with their hands, face and body movements. The male dancers encircle the females, waving their hands and red handkerchiefs usually accompanied with their chanting 'Hoi, Hoi hoi, hoi'. The dancers try their best to show their talent and it is the audience who usually award the best dancers by pinning money on their dresses. The instruments used are the Nakra, the Ksing Kynthai and the Tangmuri are used.

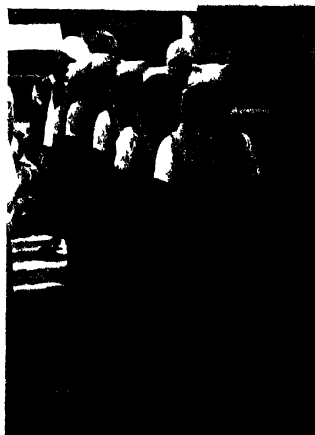
SHAD NONGREP (Farmer dance)



Ka "Shad Nongrep" or "Farmer dance" depicts the life of the cultivators in the rural areas in West Khasi Hills. The traditional way of life of the people is rapidly changing. With the passage of time it stands in danger of becoming unrecognisable. This dance has been composed for the purpose.

In this dance, the dancers make their entry in pairs one after another, carrying their working tools according to the type of work performed in all seasons of the year. For example, during the sowing season, they will show their ploughing hoe, along with 'Ka Knup and Trap' which protect them from rain. During the harvest they carry the 'tli' (mat), 'Khnap' (thrashing tool) and 'Prah' (Winnowind basket). When they collect firewood, they carry the 'Waltbnoh' (a dao with crooked head) and 'Khohdieng'.

SHAD KOHTHEW - PARIONG



The 'Kohthew' or 'Bukhew' (a hoe) is a very important cultivation implement of the people in the rural areas. It is a symbol of hope for them. It symbolises the continuity of livelihood in the present and the future expectation. It also depicts their love of freedom. The dance shows that the hoe is part and parcel of their everyday life. It is used in cleaning the gardens and fields, in digging potatoes and in ploughing.

SHAD BEH MRAD (Hunting dance) :

There are two 'Hunting dances' created out of the animal hunting in Pariong-Mawiang area.



(1) Beh Khiat/Skei

This dance depicts the hunting of animals like deer, mountain goat, etc. which usually destroy the crops. When someone witnesses anything like that, he would inform the village Headman. Then the message is announced by the beating of drums. A very able-bodied man takes up a bow, arrow and spear with their hunting dogs, gather at the village outskirts. Everytime before hunting, they pray to God through 'Khan Sbai' to seek enlightenment whether it is the right thing to do and also that God will be their guide.

The leader supervises the plan, gives direction to all the hunters. Those with dogs known as 'Nongaiksew' leads, followed by others called 'Nongbuddien'. When they find the footprints they give a signal so that the circling groups will understand from the excited barking of the dogs. Then they slowly approach towards the expected hiding place. All of them aim, any of them may shoot, but most of the time only one lucky person finds the target first. He is known as 'Dongbah'. It is the right of Dongbah to get two shares out of the kill.

When the animal is killed they erect a platform, place the animal in a standing position as if it were still alive. The mouth is kept open to make it look guilty. They decorate it with wild flowers and carry it to their village. Along the way they dance, shout and chant to insult the animal which was their enemy. Long before they reach the village their shouting and chanting inform the people at home that they have caught the animal. When they reach the village meadow, all the women and children gathered to welcome the victors. They celebrate the victory and divide the meat with 'Dongbah' getting an extra share. One extra string without meat known as 'Kyndang Plet' is usually prepared so as to give them reasons to go out hunting again.

SHAD BEH MRAD (Hunting dance) :

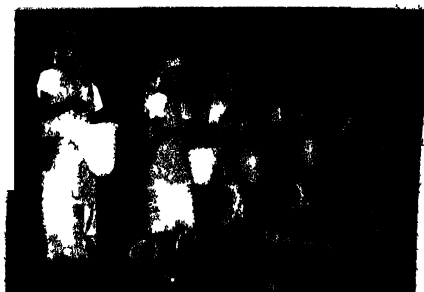
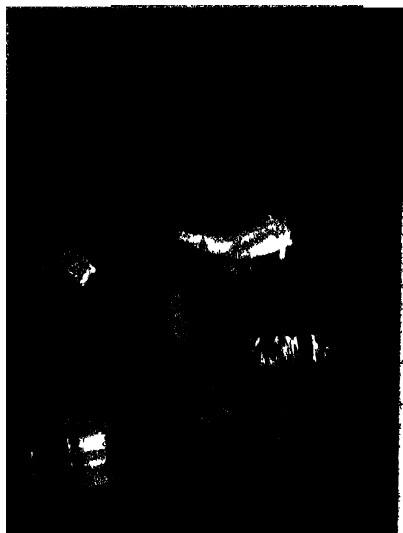
(II) Beh Khia :

This dance depicts the hunting of a tiger/leopard. When some one witnesses that the tiger/leopard has killed or harm any livestock or person, he informs the village Headman. Then the news is announced by the beating of their drums and oil cans (tin sharak). Every able bodied man with his torch 'Dongmusa', brought out the 'tin sharak' along with their hunting dogs together at the village outskirts. Everytime, before hunting, they pray to God to seek guidance whether it is admissible or not and pray that He will also be with them,

The 'Nongaiksew' leads followed by the 'Nongbuddien'. When they are sure of the hiding place of the prey, they start beating their drums and cans very fast. The tiger when irritated comes out into the open, the can beaters keep beating to deafen and confuse the tiger. The tiger starts running here and there, until at last while trying to avoid the hunters, it runs to hide in a cave. Some hunters keep beating drums at the mouth of the cave, while the other hunters seal all the possible exits in the cave and except one. Then they light a bonfire with their Dongmusa at the cave's mouth. The tiger will not be able to stay inside for long. It will try to come out from the hiding place. The hunters stuff leaves and twigs to force the smoke towards the cave. At last, the tiger becomes so weak due to suffocation and it dies.

When they have killed the animal, they build a platform, tie and carry it in a standing position to the village with shouting and chanting as an insult to the animal that caused them so much distress.

HEAD PHAP KWUAR - PARIONG



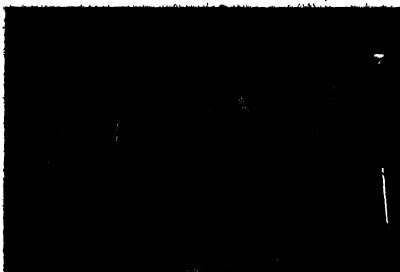
Pariong area lies as an island among three surrounding rivers, the Kynshi river, the Rilang river and the Umjataan river. There are also many small streams and rivers near the paddy fields in and around the village. All these waters are the habitat of different types of very small fishes called 'Byrthih' (shalynnai) and 'chiar kteh'. It is the past time of young boys and girls to collect these byrthih, cook them for lunch and dinner. In the rivers they use fishing rods and small fishing nets (bnei). In the streams they use special baskets called 'riah tongbyrthih' for girls and 'kwiar' or 'ruh chiap' for boys. They make a basket cage (ruh) to keep the byrthih they had caught.

This dance depicts the life of the young people, while catching small fishes and also symbolizes the kind of friends or companion they will meet in the future.

The girls along with their 'riah tong byrthih' and 'ruh' the boys with their 'kwiar', 'ruh chiap' and bigger 'ruh' come out from their homes, whistling away with happiness. They go down to the streams. The boys keep their 'kwiar' or 'chiap' in the stream along the irrigated fields. While the girls try to find the best place to collect their byrthih along side the streams. This way they collect these fishes and byrthih. While they dance glow with happiness during the whole exercise as if to say this is life and nothing else matters.

Types of byrthih: thih kung, chiar kteh, dohtlei, thih laagsaw, tham etc.

CHANG KSEIN (DRUM DANCING) : PARIONG



The 'Chang Ksein' is a dance accompanied by drums, a flute and bells called 'Meirang'.

This dance is performed on the funeral or death anniversary of kings, priest and elders. The people believed that the departed souls have not yet reached the Heaven's Gate (Ka Dwar U Bief). It is a drumming for the dead calling on God to accept them in his dwelling place.

Every drummer is happy to participate at the 'Chang Ksein' both to show their skills and to win the competition. In this dance, a smaller drum called 'Kyndoh' leads the beat while the 'Ksing Kmie' follow after it. For every two 'Ksing Kmie' there is one 'Kyndoh' which together form one 'skit'. The dance includes the rhythm of the drums with forceful stamping of feet. The dancers dance for hours until they are exhausted. It is a very tiring dance but also an exciting one. The last one who stays on the floor dancing is the winner.

This dance is divided into four steps. The first one is the 'Ksing Lynti' or 'Ksing laid' whose beat is very slow in tune with the flute. This step depicts the funeral procession and also invites the dancers to stand up and get ready for the competition. Some good drummers from neighbouring villages join and participate in the festivity.

The second step, the 'Ksing Kynruh' is faster and usually performed in the house of the deceased. While friends and relatives sit and chat around the fire, the drummers give their best to win the competition.

The third step, is the 'Ksing Pynwai'. Hence, the beat is slower, which means that the competition is nearing the end. The tired dancers will try to regain their strengths. Sometimes, the 'Kyndoh' will repeat the beat of the 'Ksing Kynruh' and the competition continues.

The last concluding step is the 'Ksing Pynkur' which is the slowest and is accompanied by the flute.

SHAD KOH LUNA



'Koh Luna' was a great fighter of the Mawiang Syiem Ship. His name was 'U Koh Luna Thabah' a great forefather of the Marwein clan from Nongdom, a locality of Pariong Village. He was a very strong leader. The Mawiang and the Maram Syiem Ships were always involved in clashes over the land from time to time. Stories of wars between them were related from generation to generation. There are till today three landmarks of these wars in Nongdom till today. One is the 'Kharai Nat' or a 'Khyrdop Shipai' (a man made cave) within a small hillock called 'Mawtynrong' where the Mawiang soldiers took shelter during the wars. The second one is the 'Mawshut wait' a big whetstone in which the fighters sharpened their spears. 'Spear' marks can be clearly seen even today. Now, only a part of this Mawshutwait remains. It was broken and split when the approach road was built in the year 2000. The third and most impressive marks are the 'Footprints' which the locals called 'Ki Dienjat U Koh Luna' in 'Proh jyndem'. These footprints can be seen till today, but due to the wear and tear in the passage of time, the shape of the toes are disappearing and may completely disappear after a few years, if not preserved.

This dance is created to preserve the true story of Koh Luna. It also shows the digging of the Kharainat (Man made cane) and the sharpening of the spears. The best part was when the final truce was made between the Marwein and Pariong Clan after a long fight over a plot of land. While the Marwein and Pariong clans soldiers stood facing each other, Koh Luna with authority stood on a large stone, raised his spear, stamped his right foot and said, 'this is ours', (kane ka jong ngi) then stamped his left foot, pointed his spear towards Pariong land, said 'that is of yours' (katai ka jong me). From that day onwards, all fights about the land stopped.

SHAD AIDEIT OF NONGTRAI & LYNGNGAM



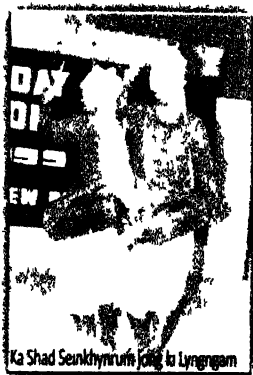
"Shad Aideit" means "to offer the drinks" and this is a popular dance of the lyngngams. During this dance the female dancers offer the drink to the males especially when they return from war. It is also meant as offering a drink to any honourable man. The materials used in the dance are Swords, Shield and baskets with bamboos.

**SHAD REIN MAW OF THE LYNGNGAMS :
MEANS PULLING THE STONE**



This dance is connected with erection of stones/monoliths in memory of those who passed away, and while dancing the dancers move as if a stone is being hauled.

SHAD SEIN KHYRRUM



This is the oldest traditional dance of the Lynggams. It is performed during cremation. In this dance there are two or four dancers and one or two persons should play the Sein kyndoh or round shaped drum(s), beating on the ground and one person play the flute (Tangsohma).

SHAD LYNNIANG :



It is a dance of remembrance for the ancestors who had passed away, praying to them to bless the living folks so that they can live in peace and harmony. There are 16 (sixteen) dancers, 6 females and ten males. Besides the drums and Tanglihir (blowing bamboo/horn) wiang which look like black plates are also used.

SHAD KNIA SNGEI



Shad Knia Sngai of Mawkyrwat, West Khasi Hills is a dance which is also known as the "Shad Wad Lok" usually performed by people residing at Hima (Province) Maharam. This dance which means searching for a life partner is also a traditional dance to honour God and ask for His blessings after certain rituals and sacrifices have been performed. This dance is also performed at various important ceremonies that is when a new King or Syiem ascends the throne or when a Priest or Lyngdoh is appointed.

DANCES OF RI BHOI

KA SHAD LAKYMPONG OF RAIJ NAMSHA



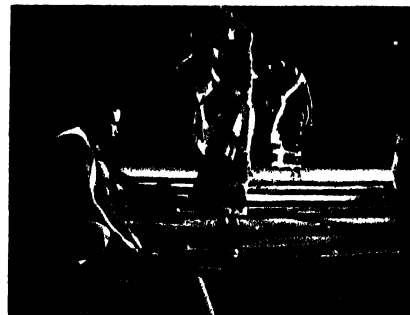
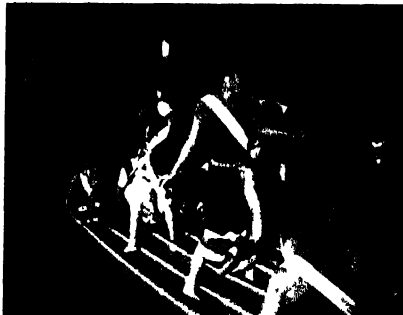
The Lakympong is an important festival of Bhoi which is celebrated in Raid Namsha and some other places in Bhoi areas. The Lakympong is the goddess of Love and marriage of the Khasi. It is in this dance where marriage proposals are made leading to nuptial ties. In this dance, only chaste maidens can take part along with the male dancers. In the olden days, this Dance was performed to celebrate their victory against the War, however now a days where war was no longer an important event, this Dance is performed as a mark of remembrance to that victory. This Dance resembles the Pomblang Dance of U Syiem Khyrim. At the Outset the Dance is performed by the maidens, dressed in multicoloured Dharas, placing their hands on the hips and move to the rhythms of the drums and the tangmuri, then the Male Dancers join them in unison.

SHAD BAMJA THYMMAI OF RAIJ UMWANG:



This is a Thanksgiving Dance for the blessing showered by the 'Lei Longspah. This Dance is performed against the back drop of folk Singers who sits in one of the rooms of the house which is called the "AngKam" whereby together they hold one bamboo called "Tayreng Langpong" or "Tyndong Siej". In this dance there are two groups of Singers , one called the "Apey Kipon or Nonglam kmie" and the Other is called the " Asso ki Chodean" who sings after the first group. The Flute is played in harmony with the songs. The Lyrics in the song are in relation with the different folklore of the raij.

SHAD SIEJ OF RAIJ UMWANG:



This dance is performed annually in the first week of the month of April. This Dance is performed in front of the house called "Tarang". This dance depicts the journey tranverse by man right from his childhood till death. There are nine pairs of participants in this dance to show that man can be reincarnated for nine times till God's Judgement day.

SHAD DOMAHEE OF RAJ UMWANG:



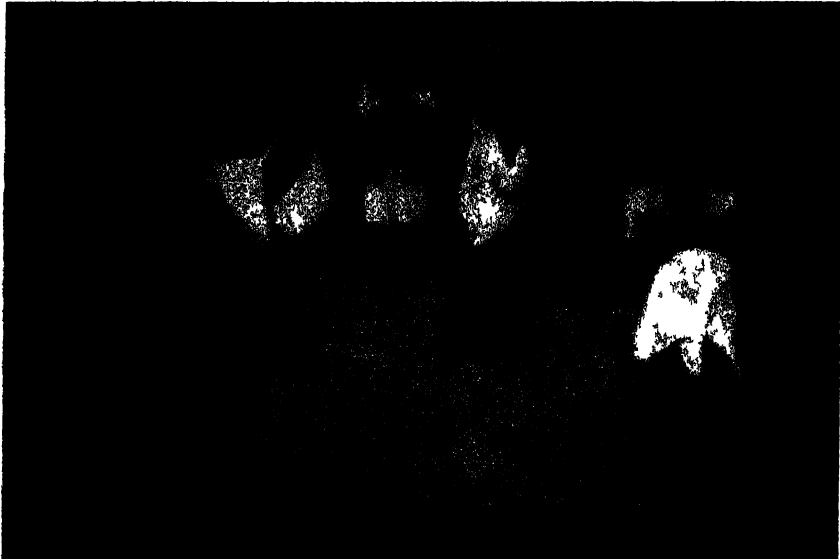
This dance 'Shad Domahee' is one of the most important dance that is performed in Raj Umwang which is usually held in the first week of April and continues till the second week of May. This dance is normally performed in each and every house in the Rajj. The main aim of the dance is to pay tribute to the cow called "The Khok-Khrang Bolansan" In the last day of the dance, the cowherd bathe the Cows and anoint them with oil . In this dance there are 8 types of tunes that are being played which shows the richness of Folk Music of the Rajj.the dance ends with the shad mastieh or the running sword dance participated by all the member of the Rajj.

SHAD PYNHER TUTA OF RAJ UMWANG:



This is the traditional Dance that is performed in Raj Umwang to depict their victory. In this dance one of the Dancer sits on the shoulder of another dancer and moves his hand like a flying bird. The Dance ended with the shad mastieh.

SHAD THUNG BAJI OF RAJ UMWANG :



The dance is performed in relation with the folklore of the raj where the Kochari king Reezco attempt to destroy the entity of the Aileng Community. This dance depicts a turnover of this vicious attempt of Reezco. However in the end good triumphs over evil and Reezco lost his own life.

KA SHAD KYNRUP KHLA :



Is a dance related to the Folklore of the Rajj Umwang. This dance shows the Kochari King who came hunting to this part of the land, met an Arleng woman whom he fell in love with and married her. However, this marriage brought more Kochari to the Land and ultimately the Arleng Community who were original inhabitants of the land lost the ownership right of the Land.

FISHING DANCE



Fishing dance of the Mikir people settled in Ri Bhoi District

SHAD SAJER BY SENG PYNNEH RITI KHADDAR LYNGDOH:

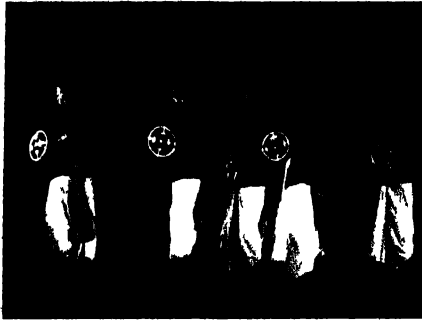
The Sajer dance is organized annually by the Seng pynneh Riti Khadar Lyngdoh in the month of January. In this dance, dancers from the surrounding Raij of Ri Bhoi District participates. The female participants wear the traditional Dhara and the Ryndia Stem. However the Male participants wear the coat and Turban and the feather of bird Rynnaiw is inserted in their Turban. The dance shad Sajer also exhibits other different dance forms as ka shad wait, ka shad dong dong, ka shad rah kynthei, ka shad shoh kba, puh lyngkha and many others.

SHAD WAIT OF RAJ NONGLYNGDOH:



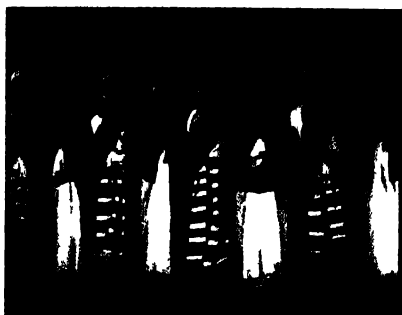
This dance can be performed by as many dancers who wish to participate in the dance. This dance is usually performed holding the sword on the right hand and the shield on the left . the dance is led by a leader selected from amongst the dancers. The dance basically resembles the Wangala dance of the Garos.

SHAD DONG DONG:



The shad Dong Dong is performed during the harvest season. This dance resembles the Shad Wait but in this dance the dancers do not use the sword and the shield as used in the shad wait.

SHAD RAH KYNTHEI:



The Shad Rah Kynthei is the dance participated by both male and female dancers. However the female participant should come from the clan of the Lyngdoh and they should be chaste maidens and dance all around the field, while the Male dancers lift up the female dancers off the ground as they make their circular dance movements.

SHAD PUH LYNGKHA



This dance is usually performed to show how the work is carried out by the Nonglyngdoh in the midst of couplets sung by them together with the beating of the drums. It is also performed to mark the joyous celebration to depict the religious rituals of the Nonglyngdoh, and also performed at the time of sowing. This dance is carried out usually by more than 20 dancers in pairs.

SHAD MASTIEH OF RAJ NONGKHARAI



The Shad Mastieh resembles the shad thma whereby swords and shield are used in the dance. However, this dance is performed faster than that of shad thma as the dancers have to keep dancing in tune with the beat of the drums.

SHAD SHOHKBA OF RAJ NONGKHARAI :



Is the harvest dance performed annually. This dance is also a thanksgiving dance where people celebrate the abundant blessings of the almighty for the prosperous yield of rice crops. The dance depicts how the rice is reaped, beaten from the stalks and collected in cane baskets. The dancers dance to the tune of the duitara (string instrument) and the small drums called 'Ksing thab'.

SHAD NGUH BEIKHA



This is the religious dance of Nongkharai to show respect to the paternal grandmother. The Male dancers wear the traditional Jainboh, Jainspong and the Ryndia. The Female dancers wear the traditional Jain Kyrshah, Jainpien and cover the head with the spur Ryndia or Ryndia Stem.

SHAD LUKHIMI OF RAJ MANGAR



Ka Lukhimi is an important religious festival of the Raid Mangar and some other places in the Bhoi areas .The Shad Lukhimi is performed once in every Five Years in the month of march before the sowing begins and after the harvesting work is done. This festival is performed to Ka Lukhmi Or the 'Leikba the goddess of Rice and agriculture which symbolizes wealth and prosperity, and also the house deity. This ritual is conducted at the iing rituals, the queen mother's house which is followed by the ritual performed at umtung stream.

KA SHAD DOMAHI OF RAIJ KHARPATI



It is one of the most important Cultural dance of the Raji Kharpati. This is the Thanksgiving dance performed by the Karbi once a year before sowing. The dance starts with the 'Pynsum Masi'(bathing of Cows), followed by merry making and religious rituals all the way to the house of 'U Bangthari', (The Headman of the Raji) and the Male and the Female dancer dance together in front of the house.

KA SHAD MASTIEH OF RAIJ KHARPATI



This dance is performed once a year in the month of March during the Religious Ceremony of "ka Knia Ryngkew". This dance resembles the shad Mastieh of the Khatar Lyngdoh and the Raij Umwang. The swords, shields are the important instruments in the dance form. This dance is confined to male dancers. White loin cloth, white shirt and white Shawl "pongho" are used in the dance

SHAD KNIA RYNGKU OF RAJ MARMAIN



The shad Knia Ryngku is held once a year in honour of ryngku or ryngkew, the patron God of villages for blessings and protecting the province from all the evils. The dance is performed by the dancers of the raj and other raj also. It is through this dance that the rich cultural heritage and religious belief which holds true and good are preserved.

DANCES OF GARO HILLS

WANGALA DANCE



Wangala Dance is the biggest festival of the Garo's synchronizing with the end of jhum cultivation which lasts for several days. This is also a festival of Dance of joy and thanksgiving to Gods. On this festival, young boys and damsels wear a new look.

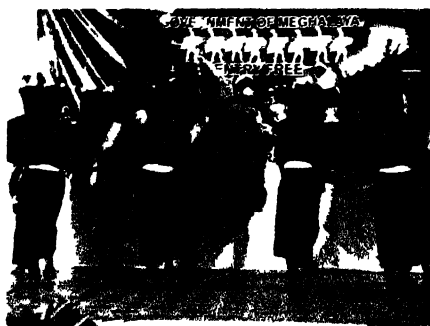
The occasion is initiated right in the field by a simple but impressive ceremony known as "Rugala Rugala". It is then followed by the ceremony of incense burning known as "Sasat So'a". This is performed inside the house of the chief or the "Nokma" of the village. The chief amidst of burning of incense, beating of drums, and the chanting of the people utter a few words of incantation and pours rice beer and sprinkles rice powder over a collection of jhum cultivation products which are offered to God's. This is immediately followed by drinking, dancing and merry-making.

GURE WATA/GURE RODILA DANCE



GureRodila or Gure Wata is a traditional dance performed by the Garos from the northern part of Garo Hills. It is performed to appease and receive the blessings of Gure mite or the House deity (Spirit) considered the god of wealth. Performed during March/April, it is initiated with rituals followed by merry-making and dancing with the deity image being carried to every house in the village to entertain the spirit.

FARKANTI DANCE OF THE RABHAS



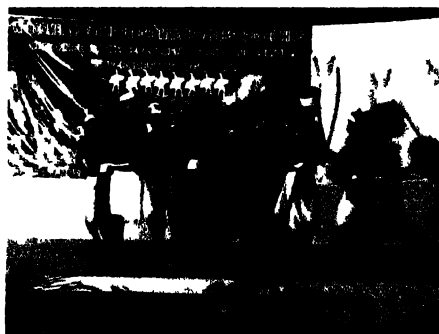
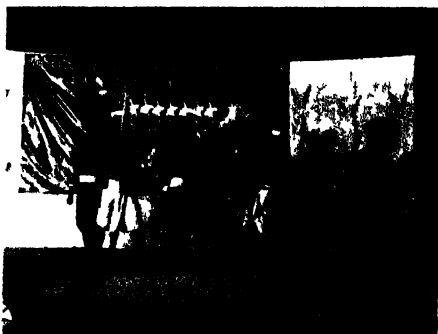
Farkanti is a traditional dance of the Rabha community performed in honour of the departed soul of a Patriot or a prominent citizen of their community. It is performed on the 13th day after the funeral for the eternal peace of the departed soul.

LEWATANA DANCE OF THE HAJONGS



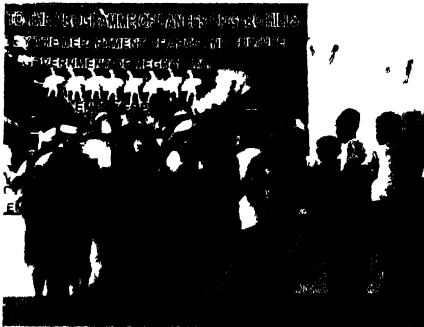
Lewatana is a traditional folk dance of the Hajong tribe performed during the Autumn season usually in October, as a sense of relief and relaxation after the end of their hard labour of cultivating their field. It is performed with songs of joy and merry-making in which everyone takes part.

HOKO DANCE



The Hoko Dance is a traditional dance performed by the Koch Tribe from West Garo Hills in honour of the departed soul of a King or a respected person. It is performed after the 13th day of cremation with rituals followed by dancing.

CHOUGAN DANCE BY THE ATONG SUB-TRIBE OF GARO HILLS



Chougan dance is a folk dance performed by the Atong Sub-tribe of South Garo Hills to bid farewell to the spirit of a dead person, whom they believe will go to Balpakram to reside after death. It is performed with merry-making and feasting after the rituals are over.

RUGA DANCE



Ruga dance of the Ruga Sub-Tribe of the Garo. This is a post funeral dance.



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